



United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

Region 5
77 West Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, Illinois 60604

Illinois, Indiana,
Michigan, Minnesota,
Ohio, Wisconsin

Environmental NEWS RELEASE



CONTACT: Mick Hans, 312-353-5050, hans.mick@epa.gov
Maggie Carson, 217-558-1538, carson.maggie@illinois.gov

F O R I M M E D I A T E R E L E A S E

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EPA ADDS TWO ILLINOIS SITES TO SUPERFUND NATIONAL PRIORITIES LIST

(CHICAGO – March 4, 2010) U.S. Environmental Protection Agency today added the Chemetco site, a closed copper smelter in Hartford, Ill., and the Lake Calumet Cluster site in Chicago, to the Superfund National Priorities List. Superfund is the federal program that investigates and cleans up the most complex and uncontrolled hazardous waste sites in the U.S.

The Chemetco site is on Illinois Route 3 in Madison County, about two miles south of Hartford. It was a secondary copper smelter from 1969 to 2001 before filing Chapter 7 bankruptcy. More than 500,000 cubic yards of processing slag, sludge and other hazardous materials were left in different areas of the 230-acre site. Elevated levels of the heavy metals copper, lead and cadmium have been found in sediments in on-site wetlands and nearby Long Lake. Chemetco was proposed for addition to the NPL in September 2009. Now that the site is on the list, Chemetco is eligible for further analysis and development of cleanup options by EPA in partnership with Illinois EPA.

The 87-acre Lake Calumet Cluster site, on Chicago's southeast side, is composed of four separate parcels. The area is bounded by the Land and Lakes Landfill to the west, 122nd Street to the south, the Norfolk and Western Railroad right-of-way and the Indian Ridge Marsh to the east, and the Paxton I & II Landfills to the north. A number of industrial and waste disposal businesses operated in the area between the late 19th century and the late 1970's.

Environmental concerns at the Cluster site include contaminated soil and wetland areas used by at least 14 different federal or state endangered or threatened species. Previously, from 1983 to 1985, and in 1990, EPA performed limited-scope cleanups including drum removals. The Cluster site was proposed for addition to the NPL in September 2005. In 2007 – 2008, Illinois EPA began construction of a landfill cap which EPA will now take the lead in completing.

In EPA Region 5, the Gratiot County Golf Course, a contaminated soil and fly ash site in St. Louis, Mich., was also named to the Superfund list today. Another Michigan site, the PCB-contaminated St. Clair Shores Drain site in Macomb County, near Detroit, was proposed for addition to the NPL. Nationally, 10 new sites were added to the NPL and 8 sites were proposed for addition to the list. Under the NPL process, sites are first proposed and public comments considered before a determination is made to formally add a site to the list.

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To date, there have been 1,620 sites on the NPL. Of these sites, 341 have been deleted resulting in 1,279 sites currently on the NPL (including the 10 new sites added today). With the proposal of eight new sites, there are 61 proposed sites awaiting final agency action: 56 in the general Superfund section and five in the federal facilities section. Currently, there are a total of 1,340 final and proposed sites.

Links to the Federal Register notice, information on submitting comments, background on the NPL process and summaries of the sites newly added or proposed are at www.epa.gov/superfund/sites/npl/current.htm.

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